

12 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

SUBJECT : Comment on MAG's Comments on the Report of Review  
of the Fitness Report Program

REFERENCES : (a) Memo to ExDir-Compt fr D/Pers dtd 19 Dec 72,  
subj: Review of Fitness Report Program  
  
(b) Memo to ExDir-Compt fr MAG dtd 22 Mar 73, same  
subject

1. In referent (b) MAG singles out two of the recommendations in referent (a) for special attention.

a. MAG strongly recommends action on paragraphs 7c and 8g which identify the need for training supervisors in the use of the Fitness Report and recommend that the Deputy Directors act to provide instructions and guidance so as to best use the system to evaluate the job performance of employees within their areas of jurisdiction.

COMMENT: We welcome MAG's agreement that more and better training in the use of Fitness Reports is a major consideration for favorable action. However, in so doing MAG seems to have overlooked the interrelationship between recommendations 8g and 8i in referent (a). The latter calls for action by the Director of Training to provide instruction in job performance evaluation for all supervisors including both the use of the Fitness Report Form and the development of skills in conducting job performance evaluation interviews. Implementation of the recommendation in paragraph 8i in each Directorate would be in tune with the instructions and guidance provided by Deputy Directors concerned in following the recommendation in paragraph 8g. It would be a serious mistake to ignore the interdependence between these actions by the Deputy Directors and the Director of Training.

b. In commenting upon the recommendation in paragraph 8b MAG seems to construct and destroy a straw man in stating its disagreement with the recommendation.

COMMENT: No doubt the problem is one of semantics. The intent of the recommendation was to encourage the employee to record

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whatever comment he believed would contribute to the record of his job performance. Yet, it cannot be ignored that an employee's willingness and interest in doing so will be influenced more by the prevailing managerial climate wherein he works than by any form or published instructions. We disagree with MAG to the extent that MAG would try to spell out the areas in which employees are expected to comment, i.e., "this statement should summarize the progress the employee feels he has made during the reporting period to component and personnel goals including accomplishments, training, such assignments and efforts he may have made to correct personal deficiencies noted in a previous report." It would be a mistake to attempt to pre-structure employees' comments in this fashion. They should feel free to record whatever they consider important. On the other hand we agree that comments in all of these areas would be useful if the managerial climate encouraged and permitted employees to record them sincerely.

2. We do not understand the thrust of MAG's comment with regard to the recommendation in paragraph 8e. Taken thus out of context it would indeed appear to be of little value. However, the intent of the recommendation seems quite clear when viewed in context in juxtaposition to paragraph 8d. The objective of these recommendations together was to have Fitness Reports record the best possible evaluations of the job performance of the rated employee. They should not be fogged by comment on the ability of the rater. The reviewing official's comments should be concerned with the performance of the rated employee. The evaluation of the supervisor as a rater belongs in his Fitness Report and not in those of his subordinates.

3. Paragraphs 1a and 5 in referent (b) are indeed disturbing because they suggest that MAG has missed the major thrust of the discussion and principal recommendations in referent (a). Quite simply, the message is that the evaluation of an employee's productivity and performance in his current assignment is quite different from evaluations of the employee (comparative or otherwise) for other purposes such as promotion, selection out, etc. There is nothing in the voluminous literature on experience with employee evaluation systems to indicate that such diverse objectives can be pursued effectively and simultaneously through a single evaluation system. The thrust in referent (a) is that the Fitness Report be used to record periodic evaluations of employees' productivity and performance in their current assignments. It recommends that the Deputy Directors be made responsible for providing guidance "in developing and administering systems for appraising such (other) factors as promotability and career potential" of the employees "under their jurisdiction." We are convinced that there is no short cut, such as MAG appears to be seeking, to cover

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these different management objectives in a single evaluation system. In the last sentence in paragraph 5 of referent (b) MAG seems only reluctantly to recognize the possible alternative of dealing with evaluations of potential in systems other than the Fitness Report. In referent (a) we tried to convey the message that the Agency has no other viable choice.

[REDACTED]

Chief, Review Staff

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